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From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles

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From the Reference Desk

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Violence is everywhere. It is on our streets, in our schools and in our living rooms. So it should come as no surprise that now there is an encyclopedia that documents it. Scribner's *Violence in America: An Encyclopedia* (2000, 0684804875; \$375) edited by **Ronald Gottesman** is a three-volume set which exposes some of the worst of our history. But this set is not merely a recounting of disturbing events. Mr. Gottesman and his contributors treat violence in America as the complicated and multi-dimensional force that it is. As you would expect, serial killers, hate groups and wars get their share of attention, as do specific events like the MOVE bombings and My Lai Massacre. However, there is also emphasis on sociological issues like domestic violence and sexual harassment, as well as factors like age, poverty and the impact of drugs. And, of course, there are articles on the cultural reflections of violence, like those in our literature, music, films, television, and on the Internet. An additional strength of the set is the attention given the involvement and effects of violence on different ethnic and religious groups.

Overall, the writing is unadorned and straightforward with each article being signed and containing a useful bibliography. There is also a contents list for all three volumes, a chronology, an overview essay that introduces the set and a thorough, 90-page index providing access to specifics. *Violence in America* is a subject encyclopedia that will have broad appeal. It is a serious and scholarly treat-

ment that will be of value to students and lay readers alike. Its relevance and strong production values make it a worthy addition for undergraduate and large public libraries.

Coincidentally, a recent encyclopedia from ABC-CLIO focuses on one of the contributing factors to the America violence noted above. *The War on Drugs: An International Encyclopedia* (1999, 0874369851; \$75) by **Ron Chepesiuk** is a handy, one-volume collection of facts, definitions, and biographical sketches related to the international drug trade and the efforts employed to combat it. More specifically, the articles cover the roles of organized crime, drug lords and cartels, government agencies and officials, private organizations and institutions, politicians, the military, and law enforcement. In addition, brief histories of individual drugs ranging from heroin and marijuana to crack cocaine and Ecstasy are provided, as well as descriptions of their use. However, some of the entries seem peripheral. What do people like **Jim Morrison, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix** and **Charlie Parker** have to do with the war on drugs, except to be prominent victims of drug abuse?

The articles are factual and concise with at least one reference source listed per entry. Whenever needed, related articles are linked by the use of "see also" references. The book also contains other helpful features including a chronology, a selected list of Websites and a comprehensive bibliography of the sources used. But the index is a disappointment. It seems to be a list of the articles along with relevant "see also" references interspersed. This would be an area of improvement for any future edition.

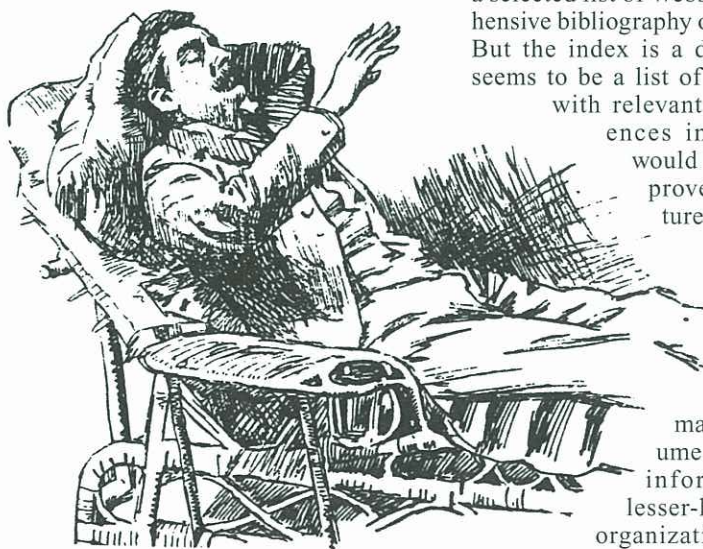
The War on Drugs: an International Encyclopedia packs an impressive amount of information into one volume. It provides basic information about lesser-known figures and organizations, while at the

same time helping give a sense of the international nature of the drug problem. Both public and undergraduate libraries will find it appropriate for their reference collections. Larger academic libraries may want to consider it for circulation.

Another subject encyclopedia that will interest both public and academic libraries is Oryx Press' *Encyclopedia of Minorities in American Politics* (2000, 1573561290; \$175). This *Encyclopedia* is divided into two volumes, the first covering African Americans and Asian Americans, the second dealing with Hispanic Americans and Native Americans. Both volumes are similar in structure, treating their subjects individually within two separate sections. However, to tie things together, both volumes contain an overall index to the set, as well as a combined timeline of events. Regarding content, there are a total of nearly 2,000 articles consisting of short biographies, discussions of significant issues and events, brief explanations of legal cases and civil rights laws, as well as descriptions of influential organizations. While the majority of articles are factual, they also include references to the impacts of the laws, individuals, and issues covered. In addition, each of the four sections has reprints of selected primary documents and a directory of current, politically active organizations. However, I have one concern. Given the importance of these topics, the bibliographies following each entry could be more substantial.

The *Encyclopedia of Minorities in American Politics* is a compact and well-designed set that provides useful information on important, but often neglected, parts of our political history. Undergraduate libraries supporting courses in minority studies and American politics will find it a useful starting point for student research. Public libraries and some large high school libraries will also find it helpful in answering specific questions and in providing needed background.

The development of Islam into one of the world's great religious and political forces is an epic story and in his latest
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From the Reference Desk
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chronology for McFarland. **Everett Jenkins Jr.** outlines this early development in precise, and telling detail. The first volume of a planned series, the *Muslim Diaspora* (1999, 0786404310; \$75) lives up to its subtitle by being *A Comprehensive Reference to the Spread of Islam in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas from the birth of Mohammed in 570 until 1500*. Arranged by date and then subcategorized geographically, the *Muslim Diaspora* offers the reader not only the dates and facts, but a sense of how Islam grew and spread. Nor is Jenkins' work Euro-centric. He pays equal attention to the historic development of Islam in Africa and the Indian Subcontinent, as well as in Asia. Jenkins also interweaves the relationship between Islam and the other great religions, Christianity and Judaism, as they influenced and were influenced by each other. A variety of appendices accompany the text, including definitions of the Five Pillars of Islam, a description of the Islamic calendar, a list of holy days, various movements and sects, and lists of Muslim rulers. But far more essential is the subject index. After each entry in the index there are two numbers, one referencing the date of the occurrence and the other, in parenthesis, the page on which the information appears. Therefore, it requires some awareness of the time in which one is interested in order to make efficient use of the index. Nonetheless, it is a very useful tool.


The Muslim Diaspora: A Comprehensive Reference to the Spread of Islam in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas: 570-1500 is a unique resource that has relevance for students of Islamic Studies, as well as religious and world history. Serious scholars may even find this book a useful reference for their personal collections. Academic libraries could consider it suitable for either reference or circulation.

More informative than the *CIA World Fact Book* and less dense than the *Europa Yearbook*, H.W. Wilson's *Facts about the World's Nations* (1999, 0824209559; \$75) is a worthy mid-range alternative. Edited by **Michael O'Mara**, this book covers close to 250 countries, territories and dependencies. Each entry contains information on the history, economy, geography, climate, demographics, religion, language, government, foreign relations, communications, education and welfare of the nations covered. Arranged alphabetically, this is an information-rich volume that would be a natural for a ready reference collection. However there are a couple of negatives. While the pages are crammed with useful in-

formation, the accompanying maps lack detail and look like they have been excerpted from *Maps on File*. Also, although the publication date is 1999, it was first published in the UK as the *ITN Factbook* in a 1998 edition. In short, the information is somewhat dated. Nonetheless, this book would be a good choice for libraries needing a thorough, inclusive and easy-to-use reference on the nations of the world.

Tracing its publishing history back 230 years, *Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage 2000* (2000, 156159265X \$375) is an Anglophile's delight. In one volume, it provides biographical sketches for the Royal family, peers of the realm (those entitled by heredity to sit in the House of Lords) and baronets (a lower hereditary order of honor, made up of commoners). It also acts as a genealogical guide to their families and collateral branches, as well as providing the family coat of arms. In addition, *Debrett's* pro-

vides a guide to the wearing of Orders of Chivalry, Decorations, etc., a discussion of the institution of the Royal Family, explanations of the various ranks and titles, and a discussion of the Orders of Knighthood and Chivalry. What it is not, is a way to search your family tree, unless, of course, you are a member of the Royal Family, a peer, or a baronet. And, even then, it is not a complete family lineage. Oh! Neither **Sir Paul McCartney** nor **Sir Elton John** is listed. They are mere knights, not peers or baronets. However, what *Debrett's* does contain is a fascinating glimpse into the British aristocracy and its formal manners.

Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage 2000 is worthwhile addition to libraries where there is high interest in British biography and the Royal family. But, the question other librarians will have to ask is do we really need it? And, is it worth \$375. Admittedly, *Debrett's* is published every five years, so if you amortize the cost it sounds more reasonable. As always, the decision is based on need. 

Berry & Everingham Interview
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ATG: What about the future? Do you have other plans? How about electronic books?

B&E: We want to continue publishing all across the U.S. and the South. We have books regarding 44 states, and we would like to make that 50. We are also diversifying.

As for other series, we are commissioning and producing visual histories that focus on colleges, sports teams, and small communities. We are also publishing books that contain oral histories of a specific town or county with photographs. We feel that these new series will be just as popular as our *Images of America* titles.

ATG: One final question. Tell us about yourselves.

MB: I graduated from Furman University in Greenville, SC, with an English degree and am a certified secondary English teacher. I worked as a part-time editor at my first job before joining Arcadia as a production editor. I currently serve as the publisher for the Southern office, coordinating the commissioning and production of all titles in this region. I find my job to be challenging and rewarding.

KE: I have worked in England, Australia, and South Africa and have been in publishing all my life. I, too, enjoy working for one of the great secrets of the American publishing industry—Arcadia. 

Rumors
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Well, I've heard about "bad hair" days, but how about "bad mail" days (that's mail, not email)? Poor **Mary Beth Pappie** (Dinand Library, College of the Holy Cross) <MPAPPIE@holycross.edu> in Worcester, Massachusetts tried to send her renewal to *ATG* in to the right address and the postman stamped that there was no such address! Gulp! Maybe I'm living at a virtual address?! No one else has had a similar problem, have you? And thanks, Mary Beth, for your perseverance, patience, and subscription!

On Tuesday, December 14 at the **Tropicamar Beach Club** in Carolina, **Puerto Rico**, **Secretary of Education of Puerto Rico Victor Fajardo** presented **Project SABER (Electronic Libraries Network Automation Systems)**, Puerto Rico's island-wide centralized school and public library automa-

tion network. Fajardo also announced the selection of **SIRS Mandarin**, a Boca Raton, Florida-based library technology firm, to provide library automation initially to 120 libraries in Puerto Rico. Over 400 librarians, educators and administrators attended the event. **Project SABER**, developed and implemented by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico, is part of the Department's efforts to revolutionize the educational process in Puerto Rico. More than 640,000 students and 1,500 libraries are projected to benefit from Project SABER, which is supported by State and Federal funding provided by the **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)** and **Technology Literacy Challenge Funds**. With an initial funding of \$4.3 million, Project SABER aims to provide all Puerto Rico public schools and libraries with access to a centralized library automation system, new audiovisual and technology equipment and

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